

Department of Fire Services

Special Operations Division



2005 Annual Report

Introduction

The Special Operations branch at the Department of Fire Services has recently completed five years of providing support to the fire services of the Commonwealth. Since its inception in late 1999 with the Incident Support Unit, response team and equipment has grown to a level that found the team responding to fifty-seven incidents last year, some of which involved both the ISU and Rehab responding to the same event.

Last year we took delivery and quickly put into service the new REHAB truck that has allowed us to provide reliable service in a much quicker response time frame. The new truck has allowed us to not only respond to the needs of the fire service in a quicker fashion but also to enhance the service we are able to provide.

Other improvements to vehicles and equipment were done during the year including the addition of new radio consoles in the ISU and the purchase of a twenty by twenty-one foot inflatable tent and accessories that can be set up next to the ISU or deployed at any location as needed.

The technical support staff committed itself to working with the Fire Chiefs' Association of Massachusetts in the delivery, testing and training on the six new Field Communications Units which are in service in Pittsfield, Holyoke, Worcester, Taunton, Waltham, and Lowell. Although the DFS staff is not the primary response team for these vehicles, they will continue to offer technical support to these vehicles and the teams made up of staff from the fifteen fire districts.



Field Comm Training exercise with ISU and Rehab at MFA

Mission Statement

To promote and deliver exceptional operational support to the operations of the fire service within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, by providing professional, efficient, high quality support services to the local incident commander in a timely and proactive manner.

Fire Service Support

The importance of the support and commitment we have received from the fire service across the Commonwealth cannot be overstated. The success of this program is a tribute to the tremendous cooperation and commitment from departments that we have been able to provide service to, and most importantly from Chiefs and departments that have staff that also work as part of the Special Operations group.

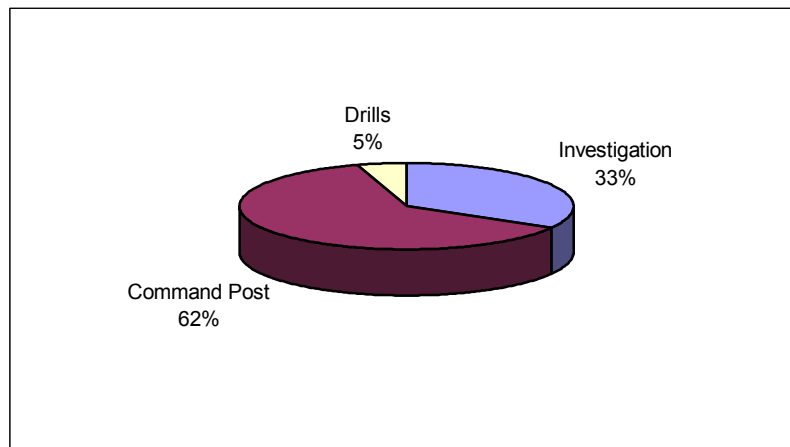
Contacting us

To request activation of any of the Special Operations resources 24 hours a day seven days a week please call the Communications Office at Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency at 508-820-2000. A color flyer is can be printed and posted from the DFS web site. <http://www.mass.gov/dfs>



New Zetron radio consoles with computer monitor wall mounted in the ISU

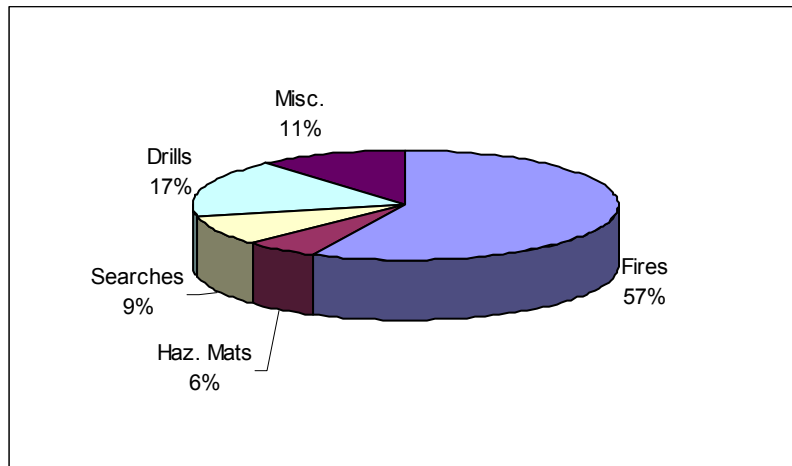
2005 Incident Support Unit Responses – 21 Total



The Incident Support Unit (ISU) responded to 21 total events last year with some lasting several days in length. One of the more notable responses was that to assist in the coordination and communication of “Helping Hands”. This found the ISU responding to Otis Air National Guard on the Cape to provide support to the people that were devastated by the hurricanes. The unit was used as an operations base for the chiefs responsible for the fire and EMS components of this effort as well as to provide a communication platform for many agencies to operate on for not only the evacuees arrival but in the days to come. During the year there were several responses to multi alarm fires including the Church Fires in Weymouth and Provincetown, apartment complex in Pepperell, Mill building in Lowell, and an explosion and fire in Leominster. The unit was called to assist local and state fire investigation teams at several fires throughout the area to provide a platform for interviews, meetings, and the processing of information. At the request of some communities, the ISU was deployed to assist at actual large-scale drills. The unit was used as part of the exercise as well as a platform to run the exercises. These drills have proven to be very beneficial to the local communities and our staff. We have learned greatly from participating in these types of exercises and have gained knowledge that we can bring with us to actual emergencies.



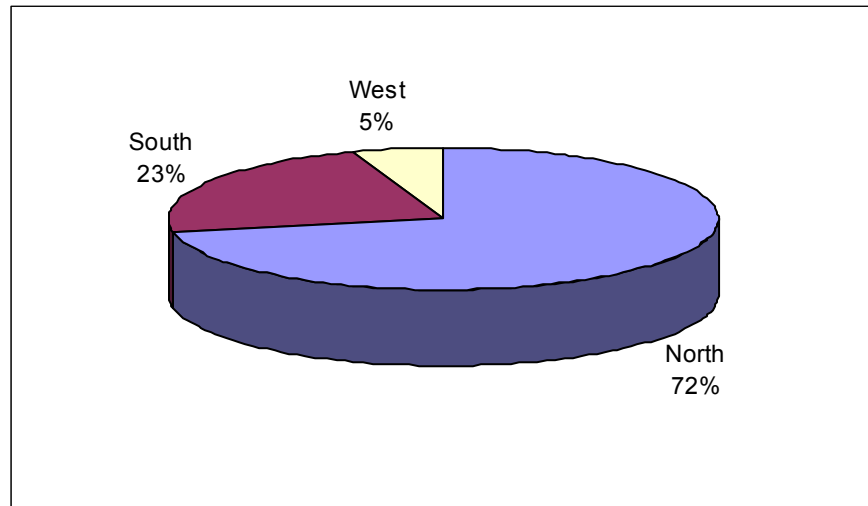
2005 Rehab Unit Responses – 35 Total



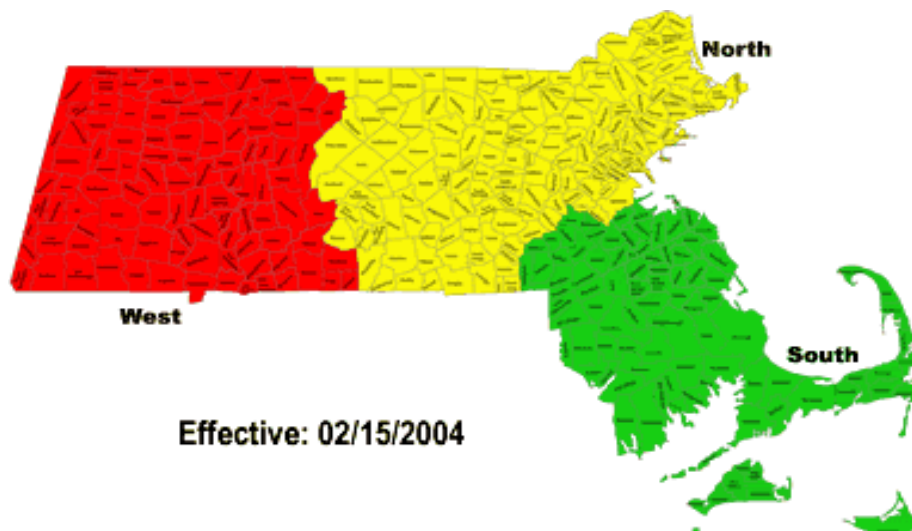
The new Rehab truck has been increasingly called upon to provide services at a variety of scenes as well as pre planned special events (i.e., support at the cemetery for two funerals, all indicated in the misc. category above). Early in the spring, DFS took delivery of the new state of the art Rehab truck. The completely self contained unit is designed to provide operations inside, outside (both sides) as well as to move operations to a location remote from the truck. The interior seats 19 people and include EMS s equipment, liquid refreshments (hot and cold), and light snack food. To facilitate this, the unit carries 50 gallons of potable water, ice machines, refrigerators, and a hot water/coffee machine. Both sides of the unit exterior can be covered by awnings and sides, and have misting machines pre wired and plumbed for immediate use. The roof of the unit has a 1000 watt light tower and a Koehler generator that runs off the vehicles fuel tanks. You can take a virtual tour of the interior of the unit by visiting the Vehicle's section of the Special Operations pages on the DFS website. http://www.mass.gov/dfs/er/sp_operations/appr_irt.htm once you have the picture of the truck on you screen click on picture to start the tour.



2005 Responses by Team District

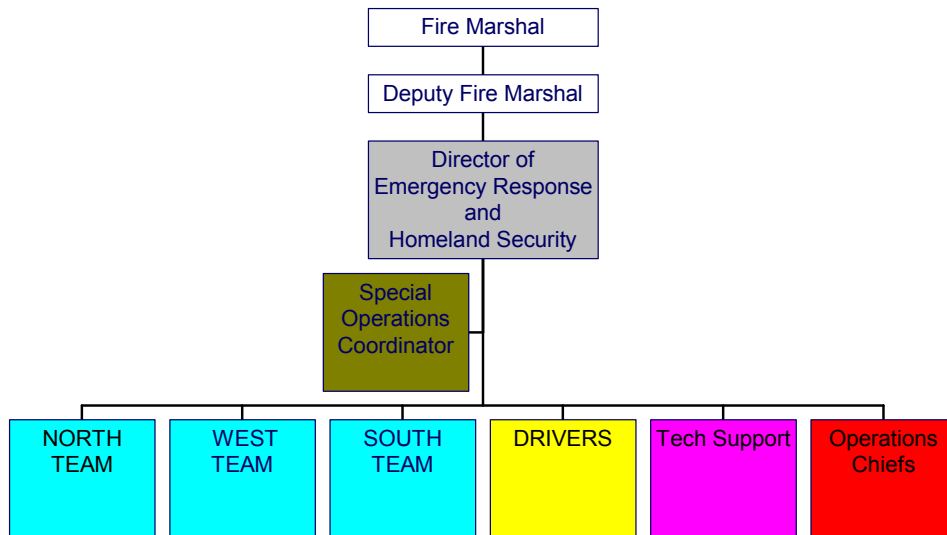


Response Team Districts



Staffing

The Special Operations staff is the major component of the success of the program. Without this dedicated staff, we would not be able to offer the services needed by fire service during incidents and scheduled events. The division has recently had some original members step down from the team and they will be replaced in the spring of 2006. As the division responses increased, and the demands on the staff increase, DFS will be looking to increasing the size of the response teams.



Operations & Liaison Chiefs

Two of the key components of our Special Operations Response Team are the Operations Chiefs and the Liaison Chiefs.

The Operations Chiefs are chiefs that work for and represent the State Fire Marshal at incidents where the unit has been deployed. Their role is to direct and facilitate Special Operations as needed by the local Incident Commander. These chiefs have been selected to represent the three ISU response districts.

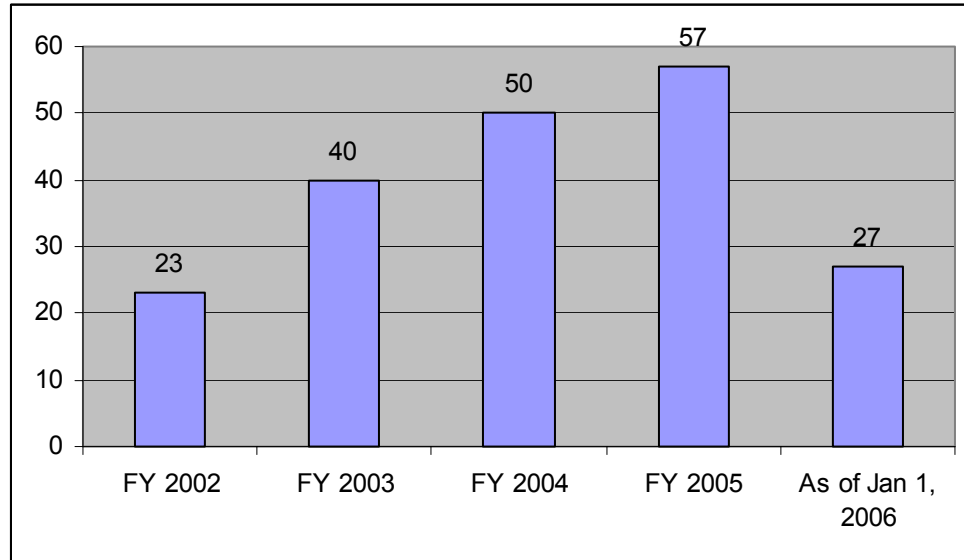
All Liaison Chiefs serve as the liaison between the local Incident Commander and the Special Operations Group. The Liaison Chiefs have had the opportunity to meet and go over expected roles and responsibilities at training sessions conducted this past year. Each Fire District has the responsibility to choose Liaison Chiefs to fill this important role.

The Future

The future of the Special Operations Division continues to grow. The request for services, as well as the upgrade of materials and equipment continue to keep the team busy. We have been, and are still, committed to providing a support service to the fire service of the Commonwealth. It is hoped that with continued funding, the technology aspect of the vehicles as well as the staff will continue to grow to meet the needs of those we serve.

Although at this time there are no plans for any major purchases or upgrades in 2006, we will continue to look for financial opportunities to upgrade, replace and enhance equipment we currently have.

The Special Operations Division of the Department of Fire Services web site will be updated on a regular basis with any changes, responses and photos. We would encourage people to visit the Department of Fire Services web site not only for news about Special Operations but for all divisions within the Department of Fire Services. Members of the fire service should utilize this tool to keep up to date on changes that affect them and on services, and programs that are available to them. You can visit the web site by going to <http://www.mass.gov/dfs>



Team Responses by fiscal year

Goals for 2006

Some of our goals for 2006 are as listed below:

- Transition to a full time Director of Emergency Response and Homeland Security to enhance daily operations
- Continue to purchase, install and upgrade equipment as the fire service and technology changes
- Deliver a statewide orientation program highlighting the services and equipment available as well as how to activate a response
- Continue to validate and expand databases that are kept on the vehicle for on scene use.
- Provide statewide technical support to the Chiefs Field Communications Units

For scheduled events or general questions please call the Special Operations Office at the Department of Fire Services at 978-567-3171.



Late 2005 Special Operations put into service a 20 X 21 foot Zumro Tent. Unit has lighting, heat, and interior division panels and responds with a trailer with tables chairs etc... Set up time is under 20 minutes !